

FINDING YOUR NEXT VOLUNTEER : A PRACTICAL GUIDE

There are many ways to recruit volunteers, but the key is to choose the method that best suits your target audience.

Where is your audience?

- Consider where they are most likely to see your message. Will they respond to traditional newspaper adverts, or are they more active on social media?

Choose the right platform

- Tailor your recruitment approach to match the habits and preferences of the people you want to reach. Promote inclusivity.
- Always aim to attract volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds. Inclusive recruitment helps build a stronger, more representative volunteer community.

Creating an effective volunteer advert

An advert might be the first time someone hears about your organisation—so make it count! A well-crafted advert should be:

- Clear and concise
- Informative, with contact details and where to find out more
- Appealing, with a title that grabs attention

Do your research

Before writing your own advert look at examples from similar roles or organisations.

Ask yourself:

- Which ones stand out—and why?
- Which ones appeal to you?
- How easy were they to find?

Stand out from the crowd

Avoid bland titles like "Volunteers Wanted".

Instead:

- Use creative and engaging titles
- Humour or intrigue can go a long way
- Example: A charity shop used "Retail Guru Wanted!"—and was flooded with enquiries.



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Tell your story

Explain what makes your organisation and its work unique and meaningful:

- Highlight the variety of services or activities you offer.
- Share how your work impacts the community.
- Don't assume people know what you do—show them why it matters.

Use a mix of approaches

Think beyond posters and leaflets:

- **Share stories**—a volunteer or beneficiary interview in a local paper or on the radio can be powerful.
- Radio interviews.
- Even if it's not a direct ask, always include a line like:
“If you'd like to support us, volunteering could be a great way to get involved. Contact us at...”

Where to advertise volunteer opportunities

To reach the right people, it's important to use a mix of advertising methods. Below is a guide to help you choose the most effective channels.

Face to face promotion

Don't underestimate the value of face to face. Your staff, volunteers, and supporters are your greatest ambassadors. Use personal connections to spread the word:

- **Word of Mouth** – Encourage current volunteers to share their experiences.
- **Taster Sessions** – Let potential volunteers try out a role before committing.
- **'Bring a Friend' Initiatives** – Invite volunteers to bring someone along.
- **Open Days or Events** – Showcase your work and welcome new faces
- **Let people experience your organisation first hand**—it builds trust and enthusiasm.

Print and media advertising

Leaflets and Posters

- Place them where your audience is likely to see them: supermarkets, libraries, GP surgeries, schools, and community noticeboards
- Always ask permission before displaying
- Avoid date-specific content so materials stay relevant longer.



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Newsletters

- Use your own or partner newsletters (e.g. parish or community bulletins)
- Combine adverts with stories or testimonials
- Include images to make your content more engaging

Events, visits and talks

- Attend local events like school fairs, farmers markets, or community festivals.
- Host a stall or offer to speak about your work.
- Arrange to talk to a local group (Womens' Institute, Men's Shed, U3A) to share your highlights, successes and aspirations.
- If you're looking to recruit young volunteers visit local schools and colleges to display your information. Don't forget D of E students or other youth volunteering programmes (The Power of 10 in Ripon).

Press and radio

- Leverage national campaigns like Volunteers' Week in June to gain media attention
- These events already have momentum—use them to get featured in local press or on radio
- Could you use more local seasonal or annual events to market your opportunities?

Online Presence

Websites

- Post roles on your own site, partner sites, and community platforms
- Keep listings up to date and include clear contact details
- Online Directories are valuable resources for showcasing your work as well as recruiting (Harrogate & Community District Action, Compass)

Social media

- Choose platforms that suit your audience (e.g. Facebook and Instagram for local communities, TikTok and YouTube for younger audiences, LinkedIn for professional roles)
- Focus on doing one platform well rather than spreading yourself too thin
- Stay active and consistent—post updates, stories, and volunteer spotlights
- Look at similar organisations for inspiration: What do they post? Who do they follow?
- Don't forget your social media input – an out of date Facebook page like a website gives the wrong message.

Additional Support

Community First Yorkshire can advise you on how to recruit and support your volunteers. Find out more about the volunteering support we offer on our [website](#), or simply fill in an [enquiry form](#) and we'll get back to you.



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